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NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS.

OBJECT AND REFLECTION.

A NORMAL LESSON ON THE SIMPLICITY OF TRUTH.

All things pertaining to life and piety are of His divine power, which is given unto us through the knowledge of Him who hath called us by glory and virtue.—2 Pet., i, 3.

—PURVER'S TRANSLATION.

Since instructions are many, hold close to those whereon the rest depend. So may we have all in a few, and the law and the prophets in a rule.

—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

Through all the diversities of human experience which necessarily ensue from the diverse limitations of circumstances and pursuits, and through all the ambiguities of human speech which may either inhere in the constitution of language, or spring from the variety of usage, there is an abiding unity of all truth, which is indicated and manifested to every enlightened intelligence, in a growing simplification of doctrine, or, so to speak, in a growing crystallization of law. The multiplicity of rules in all educational, as in all social and all individual life, so far as it is not ultimately capable of reduction to the central and comprehensive rule of "God-with-us," must be a form of practical polytheism, fraught with the distractions and dangers of a false faith. In the following more or less fragmentary suggestions the writer's desire is to inculcate the universal immanence of the supernatural in the natural, and to represent the work of education as being but one of the fields of exercise for that religious faith which moves, more or less directly, in the van of all living, progressive intelligence.

An "Object" may be simply defined as anything which is perceived or perceptible; that is, as anything "cast over against," or placed before, and so contrasted with, or distinguishable from, while subject to, our individual power of perceiving. As a secondary meaning, resulting from the desirability, real or imagined, of things perceptible as means of happiness, the term is also applied to the pursuit or desire of any such thing, and becomes nearly or quite synonymous with the terms "Design," "Purpose," "Motive." But it is so important, for the statement of first principles, to distinguish that primary meaning as a fact independent of all the variable moods of individual feeling, that the term "Object" may with advantage

be more explicitly defined as somewhat external to men, or to their individual consciousness, which somewhat, in the Divine ordering and illuminating of the perceiving being and the perceived thing, impresses the consciousness of men with a varied distinctness and fulness, according to their varied sensibility and capacity. Impressions thus received into consciousness, and there more or less definitely retained or secretly commingled, become, obviously, a sort of secondary objects, and furnish the materials of memory and "subjects" for reflection.

But while these comparatively internal facts, or subjects of reflection, are indeed subjects at will, or proper to us, as compared with those more impersonal facts which were their external occasion, they must obviously still be also regarded as external or objective in their relation and attitude to the secret individual consciousness, or the power of perceiving and reflecting, which inheres in the man proper, by virtue of his deeper relation to God.

The recorded creation of man in the image of God is the charter of his inherent superiority to the laws of inferior creatures, and even suggests the possible inference that the mention of his being created may be a figurative piece of condescension to that fallen and fragmentary condition in which he inevitably contemplates himself on the same plane with those creatures; and that his real origin in the essential and truly characteristic part of his constitution is that of an inevitable emanation of the Divine Substance in its collision with a hostile power, in that underlying conflict of the ages and the universe, which was presumably antecedent to the creation, and which is to be coeval, and coeval only, with the duration of time. But this suggestion it is unnecessary and inexpedient here to follow up further than to note that original diversity in human experience, of external fact and internal fact, which led even so profound and exhaustive an intelligence as that of Plato to regard matter as self-existent and eternal.

Without a deep appreciation of this fundamental contrast we cannot steadfastly do justice to the ever subtly shifting and seemingly evanescent, but ever stubbornly recurring, distinction between true Subject and true Object, and the consequent relativity and transitoriness of human knowledge; nor have any firm hold on the reflective power as the main element, or, indeed, as any element at all, in the development of that knowledge. But we must be led, by way of compromise, to designate the intermediate, transitional stages of a completed consciousness, as at best an indiscriminate mixture of the two elements, in which the priority of the internal is not maintained; and as the policy of concession thus accepted is consistently pursued or developed, to adopt a spiritless, materialistic faith and philosophy, barren alike of all deep principle and all lofty aspiration. But with

that appreciation, the philosophic ground may still be maintained for the universally obvious duality of Science, and the distinction between the internal or personal element and the external or impersonal may be rigidly observed through all the abounding and else inevitable confusion consequent upon the degree of profundity or insight in different observers, or in the same observer at different stages of intelligence. Indeed, despite all the inherent ambiguities of language, and all the perverse quibblings of scepticism of which those ambiguities are the stronghold, this "Subjective" and "Objective" duality of worldly and communicable experience and knowledge may be styled a direct intuition of the healthy soul, and a self-evident fact to a matured intelligence. But the ambiguities of language are themselves a result of this pervading duality of experience, and are to be mastered on the same principle of simplicity and subordination of the natural to the supernatural.

Howsoever the spiritual or substantial and the physical or phenomenal may be mediated by the intellectual or metaphysical—whatsoever division may be made of the various elements of truth, according to the stand-point and method of the observer, into subjective roots and objective branches of science, it must at least be obvious to all that there are root-sciences and branch-sciences, and that the science of language, which combines and connects them all, is justly to be regarded as the trunk of the tree. Although in itself neither a source of strength nor a seat of beauty, it must pre-eminently represent the principles, whatever they may be, which are common to all science. Indeed, the whole significance of Language, as a productive science rather than a wasteful art, consists in the fact that, as the mediator of the sciences, or the medium of their communicability and prospective fusion, it presents none other than those universal principles; and so, as it becomes indeed known to us, represents the essential and permanent conditions of all phenomena distinct from those accidental and transient ones which form so large a part of our transitional and probational experience. As the immediate omnipresence and practical omnipotence of God in nature, and a pervading harmony of nature, where not obscured without nor interrupted within by avoidable evil, are found to be the ultimate lessons of every department of knowledge, they are registered in the constitution of language, and so become the elementary materials of Grammar. The secret presence of Subjective power in Objective phenomena, which Subjective power, whether immediately consisting in the present Deity, or whether mediately represented by principles and men, maintains its own position and the subordination of nature by a continual process of creation, or expenditure of itself in new Objective forms, and so proves that subordination, and not self-preservation, is the universal law

of nature—this is the **great mystery** of grammar as of all science. Let the student of grammar, then, and of all science, begin his study with observing the ever-shifting distinction between internal and external experience, between power and phenomena, with a view to learning, in the first place, the qualities of spirit as distinguished from those of matter; and let him not dream to build except upon the foundation thus laid, if he would not have the image of his dream broken and crushed to powder before the Stone which is even now “cut out of the mountain without hands,” and which is destined to “fill the whole earth.”

As the Divine Subjective Power is antecedent to the universal Objective existence in the work of Creation, we may infer that the work of human investigation, subjective development, must be antecedent to objective intelligence. “First the root and then the fruit” must ever be the order of the truth that “springs out of the earth” under the beams of the righteousness that “shines down from heaven” (Ps. lxxxv, 2). Unconsciously, the soul of the earnest inquirer imbibes principles with facts, gaining by the process an increase of intellectual capacity which ensures their subsequent conscious discrimination and permanent possession. By the faithful observance of this just order of experience, man discovers and occupies his appointed place as lord of the outward creation. As his real life is “hid with Christ in God,” all facts furnish principles, which in turn become recognized as more important facts, and again suggest more important principles, according to the law of subjective development, until the scheme of the universe is consistently mirrored in his soul, so far as its details may be known to him, without diminishing, but, on the contrary, enlarging his appreciation of his relations towards God and his fellow-man. His very knowledge of God, the Supreme Subject, is plainly nothing more than a progress from earlier crude and contracted objective apprehensions to later refined and enlarged ones, with the extension of his own subjective capacity.

The mind of the individual and that of the race thus enlarging with the development of principles, the attainments of one age and stage become the starting-point of the next, and the primary law of education thus not only pervades all departments of knowledge, but endures through every period of progress. So far as the simplification and enlargement of language may keep pace with the same tokens of progress in general science, the teacher will be continually able to adapt his demonstrations of truth to the simple sense and craving capacity of the unsophisticated learner, never allowing his necessary practical devotion to the Objective or phenomenal to prevent that recognition of its immediate dependence on the Subjective or potential which, as an ever-shifting relationship, is that with which every learner must begin and end. Whether, therefore, it be regarded as

a unity or as a trinity, whether as the direct fusion of the subjective and objective, or as their distinct though harmonious coexistence in an otherwise "unknown God," the simplicity of Truth thus becomes the clew of grammar, and the law of education, so far as the work of education may deserve its name, by being at once elementary and progressive; and the broadest expression or illustration of that simplicity may yet appear in the profound but universal subordination of true Object to true Subject in the realm of ideas, and in the analogy, or philosophical identity of the relation existing between them, with those equally universal relationships of physical nature which are known as Polarity in the inorganic kingdom, and as Sex in the organic. The typical and far-reaching significance of these outward principles in the Divine allegory of God's creation, it may be, is only beginning to be broached.¹

RICHARD RANDOLPH.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., *January, 1883.*

THE BEAUTIFUL.

Beauty is not a local somewhat, nor is it an abstract quantity. It cannot be predicated of any scene or condition in itself, independently of human soul-condition. One's emotions may be aroused in admiration of some visible scene, and he may thence call upon a companion to observe and admire with him, but there is no certainty that the companion sees and admires *with him*—sees as he does. It is beautiful to the one, exciting delightful emotions, and is only coldly commonplace to the other. So beauty, in its merely sensory aspect even, is conditioned upon a unity or harmony between man and his relations in experience. The world of sense awakens throbs of delight and admiration only to one whose feelings are toned up to a becoming pitch of æsthetic sensibility. Mere animal relation with the sensible realms is void of such sensibility. Only human emotions can fitly respond to or record on life's tablet the *element* of beauty that is resident in the world of sense. Hence, there is sensory æsthetic experience only where there is a vital marriage of beauty of soul with outward conditions. And as the *human form* is composite in its nature, and fitted thus for delights—(1) through sensible relation with things; (2) through supersensible experience in the realm of ideas; and (3) through intimate unity and converse with the infinitely Good, True, and

¹ The reader, who may incline to pursue this analogy, is referred to the articles "Subject and Object, or Universal Polarity," *Journ. Spec. Phil.*, vol. viii, p. 97; and "Polarity in Character," vol. xi, pp. 320 and 417. The former article he is requested to correct at p. 104, l. 22, by inserting "presently" before "external"; and the latter at p. 324, l. 14, by reading "competition" instead of "completion."